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STATE OF MONTANA

HELENA, MONTANA 59620

February 28, 1983

Governor's Office, Helena, MT 59620
Broadwater County Planning Board, Courthouse, Townsend, MT 59644
City-County Health Department, Box 622, Boulder, MT 59623 MT
Commissioners, Courthouse, Townsend, MT 59644
Sheriff, Courthouse, Townsend, MT 59644
Montana Bureau of Mines & Geology, c/o Montana Tech, W. Park St., Butte, MT 59701
Soil Conservation Service, Federal Building, Bozeman, MT 59715
HUD Regional/Area Office, O.I.L.S.R., Attn: Carroll Goodwin, Executive Tower Building, 1405 Curtis St., Denver, CO 80202
HUD Regional/Area Office, O.I.L.S.R., Attn: Pat Donohue, Executive Building, 1405 Curtis St., Denver, CO 80202
Montana State Library, Helena, MT 59620
Environmental Quality Council, Helena, MT 59620
Department of Commerce, Helena, MT 59620
Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Helena, MT 59601
Department of Highways, Helena, MT 59620²
Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Helena, MT 59620
Fire Marshal Bureau, Department of Justice, 1409 Helena, Ave., Helena, MT 59620
Information Unit, Department of Health & Environmental Sciences, Helena, MT 59620
Environmental Information Center, P.O. Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624
Montana Historical Society, 225 N. Roberts, Helena, MT 59601
L.C. Hanson CO, Box 299, Helena, MT 59624
KFF Land & Livestock Co, Box 607, Townsend, MT 59644

RE: Valley Heights Subdivision
Broadwater County

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed preliminary environmental review has been prepared for Valley Heights Subdivision in Broadwater County and is submitted for your consideration. Questions and comments will be accepted until March 15, 1983. One extension of time not to exceed seven days will be granted upon request if there is sufficient reason for the request. All comments should be sent to the undersigned.

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Enclosures

Sincerely,

Steven L. Pilcher
Chief
Water Quality Bureau

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
Cogswell Building, Helena, Montana 59601
(406)449-3946

PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW


Division/Bureau Environmental Sciences Division/Water Quality Bureau

Project or Application Valley Heights Subdivision

Description of Project This project consists of 53 lots, one acre in size, plus roadways for a total area of 61.19 acres. Use is designated as single-family residential. Both water and sewage systems will be individual on-site facilities consisting of wells, septic tanks and drainfields. The site of Valley Heights is near the Silos recreation area to the West of U.S. Route 12, approximately 5 miles North of Townsend and 27 miles Southeast of Helena. A location map is attached.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

| | Major | Moderate | Minor | None | Unknown | Comments on Attached Pages |
|--|-------|----------|-------|------|---------|----------------------------|
| 1. Terrestrial & aquatic life and habitats | X | | | | | * |
| 2. Water quality, quantity and distribution | | | X | | | * |
| 3. Geology & soil quality, stability and moisture | | | | X | | |
| 4. Vegetation cover, quantity and quality | | | X | | | * |
| 5. Aesthetics | | | X | | | * |
| 6. Air quality | | | X | | | * |
| 7. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources | | | | X | | |
| 8. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy | | X | | | | * |
| 9. Historical and archaeological sites | | | | | X | * |



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POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

| | Major | Moderate | Minor | None | Unknown | Comments on Attached Pages |
|--|-------|----------|-------|------|---------|----------------------------|
| 1. Social structures and mores | | | | X | | |
| 2. Cultural uniqueness and diversity | | | X | | | |
| 3. Local and state tax base & tax revenue | | X | | | | * |
| 4. Agricultural or industrial production | | | X | | | * |
| 5. Human health | | | | X | | |
| 6. Quantity and distribution of community and personal income | | | X | | | |
| 7. Access to and quality of recreational and wilderness activities | | | X | | | * |
| 8. Quantity and distribution of employment | | | X | | | |
| 9. Distribution and density of population and housing | | X | | | | * |
| 10. Demands for government services | | X | | | | * |
| 11. Industrial & commercial activity | | | X | | | |
| 12. Demands for energy | | X | | | | |
| 13. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals | | | X | | | * |
| 14. Transportation networks & traffic flows | | | X | | | * |

Other groups or agencies contacted or which may have overlapping jurisdiction Broadwater County Health Department,

Broadwater County Planning Board and Commissioners

Individuals or groups contributing to this PER. L.C. Hanson CO., Mt. Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Mt. Historical Society, Townsend Public Schools, Mt Dept. of Highways

Recommendation concerning preparation of EIS Recommend against the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement

PER Prepared by: James C. McCauley

Date: 2/24/83

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Terrestrial and Aquatic Life and Habitats

When this subdivision was first proposed in 1979, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks was asked to comment on the impacts relating to wildlife. In response, LeRoy Ellig stated:

"The continuation of human habitation where this subdivision is proposed plus the surrounding area will definitely have an adverse effect on the resident antelope population.

We would also like to point out that under the Environmental Assessment portion of the application the developer states 'No known important wildlife area exists.' This area is very important year-around antelope range and this subdivision will have an adverse effect on antelope. This application is totally inadequate in evaluating the effects of this subdivision on antelope."

The only impact this proposal might have on aquatic life would be the increased use of fishing access sites in the area.

2. Water Quality, Quantity and Distribution

Each lot will have its own well for domestic and irrigation purposes. A test well will be drilled and analyzed for adequate quantities and quality of water. Water demand for 53 homes will have some impact on the existing aquifer. Future testing should quantify this impact.

Wastewater will be disposed of through a septic tank and drainfield system for each lot. All lots have been tested for permeability and soil types have been verified throughout the subdivision. The Soil Conservation Service classifies these soils as a Radersburg very cobbly loam. On-site testing verifies this classification and five test pits indicated sandy gravelly loams with cobbles present below the one to one and a half foot level. Groundwater is thought to be at a depth of greater than 100 feet based on well logs of the surrounding area. It would not appear that any perched aquifers are present.

4. Vegetation Cover, Quantity and Quality

Existing vegetation consists of sparse native grasses. Some change will result from gravel roadway construction and residential lawns. Since roads are not to be paved and the soils are porous, there should not be a significant increase in stormwater runoff. Culverts will be provided at the appropriate locations.

5. Aesthetics

There may be some individuals who would prefer the aesthetic values of open grassland to residential housing. However this is a subjective issue best dealt with by local planning authorities.

6. Air Quality

An increase in the amount of air borne particulates can be expected due to dusty roads and wood burning stoves. This impact should be minor.

8. Demands on Environmental Resources of Land, Water, Air and Energy

The development of this subdivision will remove 61 acres of pasture from production.

As noted in item number 2 under this section, there will be an increased demand on the water aquifer. Also, air resources may be impacted.

Due to the distance separating this development from services, retail outlets, and employers, more gasoline will be consumed by the commuter than would be necessary for a similar development close to population centers. Demands for electrical service will increase as with any other development of this nature.

9. Historical and Archaeological Sites

Marcella Sherfy of the Montana Historical Society commented on the location of Valley Heights with respect to heritage sites. There is no record of any prehistoric or historic cultural site within the proposed boundaries of the subdivision. There are 14 sites within a 3-mile radius and Montana State University has recorded 40+ cultural properties in the Indian Creek drainage a few miles south.

This information suggests that cultural sites may be present in the area planned for development. It is recommended that a cultural resource survey be conducted in all areas which have not been previously disturbed in order to identify any cultural properties that might be affected by the project.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

3. Local and State Tax Base and Tax Revenue

The change in land use from agricultural to residential will expand the tax base tremendously.

4. Agricultural or Industrial Production

The proposed subdivision site is currently used for grazing purposes. Native grasses are very sparse due to the porous, cobbly soils present. While this project does not utilize prime pasture land, it does nonetheless add to the cumulative impact of housing development upon agricultural tracts.

7. Access to and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities

The development of homes in this area could lead to increased use of the Canyon Ferry Lake recreational sites. Direct impact upon Canyon Ferry Lake and the nearby Elkhorn mountains should be minimal.

9. Distribution and Density of Population and Housing

Present land use in this area is largely 20 acre tracts. Two smaller acreage tract subdivisions are located within half a mile of the proposed site.

10. Demands for Government Services

According to Harold R. Knodel, superintendent of Townsend Public Schools, the only impact resulting from Valley Heights would be the creation of an additional bus route.

The Broadwater County Sheriff's Office will be able to supply law enforcement services. They also provide two ambulances with trained EMS personnel.

Fire protection is provided by the local district with a station at Winston and Townsend, both approximately five miles away.

Solid wastes will be disposed of through the Broadwater County Container Program and transported to the county landfill.

13. Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals

Valley Heights subdivision has received the approval of the Broadwater County Commissioners. There is no zoning in this area. Due to its distance from urban areas, this proposal would not appear to be compatible with existing land uses consisting of 20-acre homesites and grazing land. The basis of need for this type of subdivision was not fully addressed in the Assessment prepared for the planning board. Currently there would appear to be a large number of existing unoccupied lots available in this area.

14. Transportation Networks and Traffic Flows

Roads within the subdivision will be built to county standards. According to Wayne Speelman of the Montana Department of Highways, U.S. Highway 12 should be capable of handling any additional traffic.

